

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for visualizing numerical benchmarks to interpret performance of a business, comprising:
 - accessing information relating to general performance of a business in relation to an industry wherein the information includes a business ratio value, an industry lower quartile value, an industry median value and an industry upper quartile value;
 - processing the information; and
 - creating a display, including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value of the industry wherein the business ratio value is indicated in relation to the industry lower quartile value, industry median value, and industry upper quartile value and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation regarding a performance of the business in relation to the industry.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining whether the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and
 - including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value, based on the determination that the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining whether the business ratio value is outside a range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and
 - including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located outside the range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value based on the determination that the business ratio value is at least one of less than the lower quartile value or greater than the upper quartile value.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the business ratio value represents at least one of a quick ratio, a current ratio, a current liabilities to

net worth ratio, a current liabilities to inventory ratio, a total liabilities to net worth ratio, a fixed assets to net worth ratio, a collection period ratio, a sales to inventory ratio, an assets to sales ratio, a sales to net working capital ratio, an accounts payable to sales ratio, a return on sales ratio, a return on assets ratio, and a return on equity ratio.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a first color to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a first shading to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a second shading to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a minus sign to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a plus sign to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

8. A method for visualizing numerical benchmarks, comprising:
accessing information wherein the information includes a lower value, a median value, an upper value and a comparative value;
processing the information; and
creating a display, including in the display the lower value, the median value, and the upper value wherein the comparative value is indicated in relation to the lower value, the median value and the upper value, and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation indicating the performance of the comparative value.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
determining whether the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value; and

including in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is positioned between the lower value and the upper value, based on the determination that the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value.

10. The method of claim 8, further comprising:

determining whether the comparative value is outside a range between the lower value and the upper value; and

including in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is located outside the range between the lower value and the upper value based on the determination that the comparative value is at least one of less than the lower value and greater than the upper value.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein the reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a first color to indicate performance between the lower value and the median value and using a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper value.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein the reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a first shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and using a second shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a minus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and using a plus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.

14. An apparatus for visualizing numerical benchmarks to interpret performance of a business, comprising:

a memory having program instructions;

a display screen; and

a processor responsive to the program instructions to

access information relating to general performance of a business in relation to an industry wherein the information includes a business ratio value, an industry lower quartile value, an industry median value and an industry upper quartile value;

process the information; and

create a display, including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value of the industry wherein the business ratio value is indicated in relation to the industry lower quartile value, industry median value, and industry upper quartile value and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation regarding a performance of the business in relation to the industry.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the processor is further configured to:

determine whether the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and

include in the display the lower quartile value, the median value and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value, based on the determination that the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value.

16. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the processor is further configured to:

determine whether the business ratio value is outside a range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and

include in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located outside the range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value based on the determination that the business ratio value is at least one of less than the lower quartile value or greater than the upper quartile value.

17. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the business ratio value represents at least one of a quick ratio, a current ratio, a current liabilities to net worth ratio, a current liabilities to inventory ratio, a total liabilities to net worth ratio, a fixed assets to net worth ratio, a collection period ratio, a sales to

inventory ratio, an assets to sales ratio, a sales to net working capital ratio, an accounts payable to sales ratio, a return on sales ratio, a return on assets ratio, and a return on equity ratio.

18. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the processor is further configured to use a first color to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and use a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

19. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the processor is further configured to use a first shading to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and use a second shading to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

20. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the processor is further configured to use a minus sign to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and use a plus sign to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

21. An apparatus for visualizing numerical benchmarks, comprising:

- a memory having program instructions;
- a display screen; and
- a processor responsive to the program instructions to
 - access information wherein the information includes a lower value, a median value, an upper value and a comparative value;
 - process the information; and
 - create a display, including in the display the lower value, the median value, and the upper value wherein the comparative value is indicated in relation to the lower value, the median value and the upper value, and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation indicating the performance of the comparative value.

22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor is further configured to:

determine whether the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value; and

include in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is positioned between the lower value and the upper value, based on the determination that the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value.

23. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor is further configured to:

determine whether the comparative value is outside a range between the lower value and the upper value; and

include in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is located outside the range between the lower value and the upper value based on the determination that the comparative value is at least one of less than the lower value and greater than the upper value.

24. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor is further configured to use a first color to indicate performance between the lower value and the median value and use a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper value.

25. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor is further configured to use a first shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and use a second shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.

26. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor is further configured to use a minus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and use a plus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.

27. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for visualizing numerical benchmarks to interpret performance of a business, comprising:

accessing information relating to general performance of a business in relation to an industry wherein the information includes a business ratio value, an industry lower quartile value, an industry median value and an industry upper quartile value;

processing the information; and

creating a display, including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value of the industry wherein the business ratio value is indicated in relation to the industry lower quartile value, industry median value, and industry upper quartile value and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation regarding a performance of the business in relation to the industry.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, further comprising:

determining whether the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and

including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value, based on the determination that the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, further comprising:

determining whether the business ratio value is outside a range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and

including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located outside the range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value based on the determination that the business ratio value is at least one of less than the lower quartile value or greater than the upper quartile value.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the business ratio value represents at least one of a quick ratio, a current ratio, a current liabilities to net worth ratio, a current liabilities to inventory ratio, a total liabilities to net worth ratio, a fixed assets to net worth ratio, a collection

period ratio, a sales to inventory ratio, an assets to sales ratio, a sales to net working capital ratio, an accounts payable to sales ratio, a return on sales ratio, a return on assets ratio, and a return on equity ratio.

31. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a first color to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a first shading to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a second shading to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a minus sign to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a plus sign to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

34. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for visualizing numerical benchmarks, comprising:

accessing information wherein the information includes a lower value, a median value, an upper value and a comparative value;

processing the information; and

creating a display, including in the display the lower value, the median value, and the upper value wherein the comparative value is indicated in relation to the lower value, the median value and the upper value, and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation indicating the performance of the comparative value.

35. The computer-readable medium of claim 34, further comprising:

determining whether the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value; and

including in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is positioned between the lower value and the upper value, based on the determination that the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 34, further comprising:

determining whether the comparative value is outside a range between the lower value and the upper value; and

including in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is located outside the range between the lower value and the upper value based on the determination that the comparative value is at least one of less than the lower value and greater than the upper value.

37. The computer-readable medium of claim 34, wherein the reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a first color to indicate performance between the lower value and the median value and using a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper value.

38. The computer-readable medium of claim 34, wherein the reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a first shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and using a second shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 34, wherein reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a minus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and using a plus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.

40. A system for visualizing numerical benchmarks to interpret performance of a business, comprising:

means for accessing information relating to general performance of a business in relation to an industry wherein the information

includes a business ratio value, an industry lower quartile value, an industry median value and an industry upper quartile value;

means for processing the information; and

means for creating a display, including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value of the industry wherein the business ratio value is indicated in relation to the industry lower quartile value, industry median value, and industry upper quartile value and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation regarding a performance of the business in relation to the industry.

41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

determining whether the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and

including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value, based on the determination that the business ratio value is between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value.

42. The system of claim 40, further comprising:

means for determining whether the business ratio value is outside a range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value; and

means for including in the display the lower quartile value, the median value, and the upper quartile value, wherein the business ratio value is located outside the range between the lower quartile value and the upper quartile value based on the determination that the business ratio value is at least one of less than the lower quartile value or greater than the upper quartile value.

43. The system of claim 40, wherein the business ratio value

represents at least one of a quick ratio, a current ratio, a current liabilities to net worth ratio, a current liabilities to inventory ratio, a total liabilities to net worth ratio, a fixed assets to net worth ratio, a collection period ratio, a sales to inventory ratio, an assets to sales ratio, a sales to net working capital ratio, an

accounts payable to sales ratio, a return on sales ratio, a return on assets ratio, and a return on equity ratio.

44. The system of claim 40, wherein the reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a first color to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

45. The system of claim 40, wherein reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a first shading to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a second shading to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

46. The system of claim 40, wherein reference demarcation of the business ratio value includes using a minus sign to indicate performance of the business between the lower quartile value and the median value and using a plus sign to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper quartile value.

47. A system for visualizing numerical benchmarks, comprising:
means for accessing information wherein the information includes a lower value, a median value, an upper value and a comparative value;

means for processing the information; and

means for creating a display, including in the display the lower value, the median value, and the upper value wherein the comparative value is indicated in relation to the lower value, the median value and the upper value, and further including in the display at least one reference demarcation indicating the performance of the comparative value.

48. The system of claim 47, further comprising:

means for determining whether the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value; and

means for including in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is positioned

between the lower value and the upper value, based on the determination that the comparative value is between the lower value and the upper value.

49. The system of claim 47, further comprising:

means for determining whether the comparative value is outside a range between the lower value and the upper value; and

means for including in the display the lower value, the median value and the upper value, wherein the comparative value is located outside the range between the lower value and the upper value based on the determination that the comparative value is at least one of less than the lower value and greater than the upper value.

50. The system of claim 47, wherein the reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a first color to indicate performance between the lower value and the median value and using a second color to indicate performance of the business between the median value and the upper value.

51. The system of claim 47, wherein the reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a first shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and using a second shading to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.

52. The system of claim 47, wherein reference demarcation of the comparative value includes using a minus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the lower value and the median value and using a plus sign to indicate performance of the comparative value between the median value and the upper value.